

## **Latest COVID-19 updated and business support**

With the second national lockdown starting yesterday, we wanted to share the latest guidance updates with you, as well as updates on the financial support available to businesses and those who are self-employed.

If you know somebody who would like to read our e-news, please forward it on, or let them know they can register to receive it themselves on [visitthanet.co.uk/tourismmatters](https://www.visitthanet.co.uk/tourismmatters)

### **Thanet District Council**

#### **New grants available for businesses required to close in national restrictions**

At the start of the second English lockdown (Thursday 5th November 2020), local businesses who have been ordered to close for four weeks may be eligible for a government grant of up to £3,000.

The grants are based on business rates, similar to the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLGF) available for the first lockdown this spring.

The value of these grants has been set by central Government. Businesses that pay business rates on their premises are eligible for the below:

- for properties with a rateable value of £15k or under, grants to be £1,334 per month
- for properties with a rateable value of between £15k-£51k, grants to be £2,000 per month
- for properties with a rateable value of £51k or over grants to be £3,000 per month

Businesses that have had to be closed since March 2020, such as nightclubs, will also be eligible for £3,000 from 1st November.

Initial guidance from the Government was issued on Wednesday 4 November and further detailed guidance will follow. The council is busy working through this to finalise the eligibility criteria and make the necessary changes to our IT systems to enable the grants to be administered.

Information about eligibility and how to apply, will be published shortly on [thanet.gov.uk/business-advice](https://www.thanet.gov.uk/business-advice) If you're a business that is still unsure if you qualify, please contact the Business Rates Team directly at [businesscashgrants@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:businesscashgrants@thanet.gov.uk).

The dedicated business section of the council's [website](#) has details of further government schemes and initiatives that organisations may be able to access and what support is available.

#### **Thanet Business Support Facebook page**

The council is also looking to support the local Thanet business community via a dedicated Facebook group: [facebook.com/groups/ThanetBusinessSupport](https://www.facebook.com/groups/ThanetBusinessSupport). As a member of this group, businesses will be able to access up-to-date guidance from the council, as well as advice from its Business Support consultant who some local businesses may have already met.

#### **Business Support line**

Kent County Council, in collaboration with all the local authorities in Kent, has a business support line (**03333 602300**) for coronavirus-related issues, delivered by the Kent & Medway

Growth Hub. The line is now open and taking calls five days a week from Monday to Friday, 8:30am - 6pm.

## Government Updates and Advice

### The National Restriction Guidance

The [national restriction guidance](#) has been updated with some further information and clarifications. Please see below some areas that would be of interest to tourism businesses.

- The guidance for those currently on holiday has been updated: if you were already on holiday, you should return to your home as soon as practical and comply with the 'stay at home' requirements in your holiday accommodation in the meantime.

The guidance also states that businesses "consisting of the provision of holiday accommodation, whether in a hotel, hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation, holiday apartment, home, cottage or bungalow, campsite, caravan park or boarding house, canal boat or any other vessel must cease to carry on that business" except for the exceptions set out below.

### Who Can Stay in Visitor Accommodation?

Visitor accommodation may continue to operate for the following exceptions:

- (a) to provide accommodation for any person, who—
  - (i) is unable to return to their main residence
  - (ii) uses that accommodation as their main residence
  - (iii) needs accommodation while moving house
  - (iv) needs accommodation to attend a funeral
  - (v) is isolating themselves from others as required by law
  - (vi) is an elite athlete, the coach of an elite athlete, or (in the case of an elite athlete who is a child), the parent of an elite athlete, and needs accommodation for the purposes of training or competition,
- (b) to provide accommodation for any person who needs accommodation for the purposes of their work
- (c) to provide accommodation for any child who requires accommodation for the purposes of education
- (d) to provide accommodation for the purposes of a women's refuge or a vulnerable person's refuge
- (e) to provide accommodation or support services for the homeless
- (f) to provide accommodation for any person who was staying in that accommodation immediately before these Regulations came into force
- (g) to host blood donation sessions
- (h) for any purpose requested by the Secretary of State, or a local authority.

*Note: (f) allows people to stay on in the accommodation if they were before the lockdown came into force – so people don't have to return home immediately.*

Further updates to businesses and venues that can remain open, these now include:

- Car parks, public toilets and motorway service areas.
- Outdoor grounds of botanical gardens, heritage homes and landmarks (indoor attractions at these venues must close).

The full list of venues that must close/can remain open can be found on page [29-32 of the regulations](#).

Further clarifications on [weddings and funerals](#):

- Funerals can be attended by a maximum of 30 people. Linked ceremonial events such as stone settings and ash scatterings can also continue with up to 15 people in attendance. Anyone working is not counted in the 15 or 30. Social distancing should be maintained between people who do not live together or share a support bubble.
- Weddings and civil partnership ceremonies will not be permitted to take place except where one of those getting married is seriously ill and not expected to recover ('deathbed wedding'). These weddings are limited to 6 people.

### **Support for the self-employed**

The [Self-Employment Income Support Scheme \(SEISS\)](#) will increase from 50% to 80% of average trading profits, up to a maximum of £7,500, for the period November to January. The window for claiming a grant will open on 30 November, two weeks earlier than previously announced.

[Other financial support available](#) to self-employed people who are getting less work due to coronavirus has been updated in the guidance including:

- Test and Trace Support Payment
- New Style Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- New Style Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Universal Credit
- Pension Credit

### **Loan schemes application deadlines extended to 31st January 2021**

The application deadlines for the following schemes have been extended until 31st January 2021:

- [Coronavirus Bounce Back Loan](#)
- [Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan](#)
- [Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme](#)
- [Coronavirus Future Fund](#)

### **Extension of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme**

The [Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme \(CJRS\)](#) has been extended until the end of March 2021 with employees receiving 80% of their current salary for hours not worked, up to a maximum of £2,500 per month. Employers will need to cover National Insurance and employer pension contributions for hours not worked, this accounts for just 5% of total employment costs or £70 per employee per month.

The extended CJRS will operate as the previous scheme did, with businesses being able to claim either shortly before, during or after running payroll. Claims can be made from 8am Wednesday 11th November. The CJRS extension will be reviewed in January to examine whether the economic circumstances are improving enough for employers to be asked to increase contributions.

### **Other Government updates**

- New guidance on how to [repay Eat Out to Help Out Scheme payments](#) if your business over claimed or needs to payback some or all of the payments.
- The [Jobs Retention Bonus \(JRB\)](#) will not be paid in February and the Government will redeploy a retention incentive at the appropriate time.

- Businesses in the hospitality, leisure and accommodation sectors in England that suffered from reduced demand due to local restrictions introduced between 1st August and 5th November will receive backdated grants at 70% of the value of closed grants, up to a maximum of £2,100 per month for this period.
- Plans to extend the existing Bounce Back Loan Scheme, Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, Future Fund, and Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme to the end of January 2021. This will give businesses two extra months to make loan applications (relative to the current deadline of 30 November).
- Adjustment of the Bounce Back Loan Scheme rules to allow those businesses who have borrowed less than their maximum (i.e. the lower of £50,000 or less than 25% of their turnover) to top-up their existing loan.

The following guidance has also been updated in line with current national restrictions:

- [Safer travel guidance for passengers](#)
- [Guidance for food businesses on coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Advice on accessing green spaces safely](#)

## Other News

### The Tourism Sector from January 2021

The UK has left the EU, and the transition period will end on 31st December 2020. For businesses and organisations in the tourism sector, general guidance on the actions needed by December 31 can be found [here](#). For more guidance tailored to your organisation, use the [Transition self-checker](#).

The Information tells you what you'll need to do from 1st January 2021 and will be updated if anything changes. Content includes - Visiting Europe, Visiting the UK, Your employees, Your data, organisation and services, movement of goods.

## Visit Kent

### Experience Development Workshops

Funded through the European Interreg Experience project, with match funding from local authority partners, Visit Kent alongside expert Chris Brant from Unmissable England, is delivering free thematic experience development webinars.

Join them in exploring the essential ingredients needed to develop an unmissable experience, identifying the opportunities for new experiences in Kent and hearing directly from various success stories that could spark a new idea, allowing you to reach new markets and increase the success of your business.

To drive creative ideas to develop new experiential products for visitors, throughout the session they will host break out collaborative working sessions where you will work with like-minded businesses, utilising the collaborative interactive platforms of this new virtual world.

[Click here for more information and to register](#)

## Tourism Service News

### Do you sell gifts online?

We have been looking at ways we can support our local tourism businesses who have had to close due to the second national lockdown. Please send us details if you have an online

shop or if you offer a click and collect service for items which would have appeal as birthday or Christmas gifts.

Our aim is to include links on [visittthanet.co.uk](http://visittthanet.co.uk) which we would drive traffic to via activity on our social media channels. Please send information to [tourism@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:tourism@thanet.gov.uk).

### **Visitor Information Services**

Our Thanet Visitor Information Centre at Droit House, Margate will be closed from Thursday 5th November to Wednesday 2nd December. The team will still respond to telephone and email enquiries as well as any enquiries through social media, should you prefer this form of contact.

Telephone - 577577

Email - [visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk)

Social Media - @VisitThanet on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

**Ramsgate Visitor Information Centre** at Customs House will also be closed from Thursday 5th November until Wednesday 2nd December

### **Your News**

Congratulations to Margate's **Buoy and Oyster Restaurant** which has been announced a 2021 Good Food Award Winner and **The Mad Hatter Tea Room** announced Good Food Award Winner for Cafes – 2021 Gold Seal